

Benefits and Services Available for Asylees Through HHS' Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR)

Are you an individual who has been granted asylum in the United States?

You may be eligible for federal “mainstream” (non-ORR-funded) benefits, such as cash assistance through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI), health insurance through Medicaid, and food assistance through Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). You may also be eligible for cash assistance, medical assistance, employment preparation, job placement, English language training, and other services offered through ORR. This document focuses on the benefits and services funded by ORR. If you apply for the same status for your family members (“derivative asylum status”), your family members, if granted asylum, may also be eligible for resettlement benefits and services.

Who is an asylee?

An asylee is a person who has fled his or her country and is unable or unwilling to return due to persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a social group. An individual is granted asylum either by an immigration court of the U.S. Department of Justice or by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Where do I apply for ORR benefits/services?

ORR provides funding to state governments, resettlement agencies, and other nonprofit community-based organizations to provide benefits and services for eligible individuals. Beginning on or after the date that you were granted asylum, you can apply at the state government benefits office or closest resettlement agency in your state. For a state-by-state listing of local resettlement agencies, view the ORR state program directory, which also includes a link to ORR state contacts:

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/map/find-resources-and-contacts-your-state>.

When should I apply for ORR benefits/services?

Immediately. Your benefits and services are only available for a limited time. ORR-funded cash and medical benefits are limited to a maximum of 12 months from the date the immigration court or DHS granted you asylum. Most ORR employment services and other services aimed at economic self-sufficiency will be available to you for up to five years from the date you were granted asylum.

What should I bring with me?

You should bring proof of your status and the date you received that status. Proof of status can include an Order of an Immigration Judge Granting Asylum, an asylum approval letter from a USCIS Asylum Office, or an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) with the code for asylee. For more information on required documentation, see:

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/orr/orr_fact_sheet_asylee.pdf.

What are some of the benefits and services I can receive as an asylee?

Some asylees are eligible to apply for federal mainstream benefits, such as cash assistance through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI), health insurance through Medicaid, and food assistance through Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). If you are not eligible to receive these mainstream benefits, you can be screened for eligibility at a state government benefits office or the closest resettlement agency in your state for the following ORR benefits and services:

Initial ORR Benefits (Up to 12 months from the date of eligibility)

Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA)

From the date of granted asylum, asylees may receive up to 12 months of RCA to help meet their most basic needs, such as food, shelter, and transportation. RCA is linked to programming that provides family self-sufficiency planning and employment services to help clients assess their needs, plan how to meet these needs, and immediately find and maintain employment.

ORR Matching Grant (MG) Program

Some may participate in the MG Program, an early self-sufficiency initiative. Enrollment slots are limited in number and by location. The MG Program provides cash assistance, intensive case management, and employment services to help clients immediately find and maintain employment. The goal of the program is to assist clients to become economically self-sufficient within 240 days. Asylees should enroll in the MG Program as soon as possible after eligibility.

Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA)

From the date of granted asylum, asylees may receive up to 12 months of RMA to cover their medical needs. RMA provides the same health insurance coverage as Medicaid.

Domestic Medical Screening

From their date of eligibility, asylees may be eligible for a domestic medical screening examination funded by ORR. The screening supports client resettlement by identifying health conditions that threaten their well-being, providing vaccinations required for school and work, and referring them to primary care providers or specialists for ongoing health care. ORR recommends that medical screenings are completed soon after arrival in the U.S.

Services (Up to 5 years from the date of eligibility)

Refugee Support Services (RSS)

Asylees may be eligible to access RSS, which provides a wide range of services in support of employment and self-sufficiency: employability services; job training and preparation; assistance with job search, placement, and retention; English language training; childcare; transportation; translation and interpreter services; and case management.

Specialized Programs

Some asylees may be eligible for specialized programs such as health services, technical assistance for small business start-ups, financial savings, youth mentoring, or other targeted support programs.